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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 22589

E.O. 12065: GDS 09/23/87 (CAROLAN, THOMAS J.) OR-P
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, MILI EG, US, AF
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN ARMS FOR AFGHAN REBELS

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. PRESIDENT SADAT'S SEPTEMBER 22 REVELATION TO NBC NEWS OF U.S.-EGYPTIAN INVOLVEMENT IN SUPPLYING ARMS FOR USE IN AFGHANISTAN IS NOT LIKELY TO CAUSE MUCH HTIR HERE, GIVEN THE GOE'S PAST PUBLIC PROFESSIONS REGARDING ITS TANGIBLE SUPPORT FOR AFGHAN FREEDOM-FIGHTERS (CAIRO 396 AND PREVIOUS).

3. IN OUR VIEW, SADAT'S DECISION TO DIVULGE HITHERTO SECRET DETAILS OF SUCH SUPPORT WAS ALMOST PREDICTABLE. THE GOE HAS BEEN PAYING CLOSE, ALBEIT QUIET ATTENTION TO THE CONFUSING WELTER OF NEWS REPORTS. PUBLIC COMMENTARY AND GENERAL BLATHER ENGENDERED THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE EAST BY OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE SUBJECT OF U.S.-ISRAELI STRATEGIC COOPERATION MADE DURING AND AFTER PRIMIN BEGIN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON EARLIER THIS MONTH. SADAT MUST HAVE FELT THE TIME HAD COME TO GO ON RECORD WITH DETAILS OF AN OPERATION THAT HIGHLIGHTS EGYPT'S OWN CONCRETE COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. ON AN ISSUE THAT IS UNIVERSALLY VIEWED AS HAVING IMMEDIATE AND REAL STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE. IN SO DOING, HE WAS PROBABLY ONLY TOO HAPPY TO SHOW THE WORLD, INCLUDING ISRAEL AND HIS ARAB DETRACTORS IN PARTICULAR, THAT EGYPT IS IN THE FOREFRONT OF COUNTRIES THAT ARE ABLE AND WILLING TO GIVE TANGIBLE, PRACTICAL MEANING TO THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES.

4. IT IS ALSO LIKELY THAT SADAT COULD NOT RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE ISLAMIC WORLD IN GENERAL, AND TO THE SAUDIS IN PARTICULAR, THAT EGYPT HAS A LEADER WHO CAN BE COUNTED ON TO FURNISH EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE TO FELLOW-MUSLIMS STRUGGLING AGAINST SOVIET AGGRESSION. DELIVERING ANOTHER KICK IN THE RUSSIANS' PANTS SO SOON AFTER HE HAD EXPELLED FURTHER SOVIET DIPLOMATS AND TECHNICIANS FROM EGYPT PROBABLY STRUCK HIM AS A JOLLY IDEA, IN THE BARGAIN.

5. KABUL ON MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. ATHERTON
BT

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ACTION
INFO NMIC(1) SWS(1) AAT-A(1) DIO(1)
VP-A2 FRD(1) DE(1) DB-1B(1) DB-2C(1) DB-3B(2)
DB-3C(3) DB-3D(3) DB-4A(1) DB-4G(1) DB-5(1) DT-1(1)
DIA(1)

MCN=81266/03745 TOR=81266/2019Z TAD=81266/2021Z CDSN=MIA356

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